

12-10-68. DURTE & LAEMMLE 6/26/68

APPIED TO: Press Writer
AP - An exiled
Cuban army offi-
cer said today that Sirhan
was the accused assassin of
President Kennedy, told
of Kennedy's death,
and the incident in the United
States by another Fidel Castro."
Duarte took a news conference
to indicate occurred about
three hours ago in a house at
Hollywood, Calif.

In Hollywood a man identified
by Duarte as host on this oc-
casion, Robert Laemmle, denied
there was any scuffle. He de-
nied that anyone he could rec-
ognize from subsequent news
photos as Sirhan was present.
He denied also Duarte's claim
there was a Castro photo on the
wall.

Duarte said he recognized Sir-
han as the man he said he scuf-
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han as the man he scuffled with
when Sirhan's picture appeared
in newspapers after Kennedy's
death.

Duarte said the man he fought
with told him he was an Arab.

He said what we Cuban ex-
iles are doing is just what the
Israelites are doing and that we
are getting the same help from
the CIA that Israel is getting,"
Duarte said.

The scuffling began, Duarte
said, when he accused me of
being an agent of the CIA.

Duarte said: He made some
derogatory remarks about Cuba
and about me and we came to
grips. Somebody separated us.
He left.

The exile, who said he has
been living in Los Angeles, said
pictures of Castro and of the
slain communist guerrilla lead-
er Che Guevara and slogans
critical of the Vietnam war and
the Johnson administration
were posted on the walls of the
house where he met Sirhan.

Duarte said he and about 15
Cuban companions attended the
meeting after seeing leaflets ad-
vertising an exhibition of photo-
graphic slides taken in Cuba.

Duarte said he objected to
some of the descriptions given
to the slides and demanded to
be heard. He said he was given
permission but was interrupted
and the scuffling

in Hollywood Laemmle called
the scuffling claim false and
said there was no scuffling,
no one went to Sirhan, no one
had to separate anyone.

Laemmle, 40, and his partner
John, 30, and others in the or-
ganization of their People's
and Peasant relatives, took
part in the last film showing
Cuba Sunday.

He said the occasion was a
regular peace meeting in the
living room of the People and
Peasant Party Neighbor of
City of Hollywood is treasurer.
According to members' attention, he
said, giving this account.

Duarte showed up outside
with 10 or 12 men, all anti-cus-
tome Cubans, I assume, like their
leader. They were husky and
young, some in leather jackets,
some with beards, and well be-
haved. He invited them to come
in. There were absolutely no
lights of any kind.

There was verbal discussion
which this type of meeting is
intended to encourage, followed
by coffee and cookies.

The speaker was a young
man I understand is with the
Students for a Democratic So-
ciety, from San Francisco, who
had made a trip to Cuba with
10 or 12 others in that group.

He made a presentation of
about 20 slides he had taken in
Cuba. One Cuban was Duarte
attacked one of his comments
verbally. Duarte told the Cuban
in Spanish to be quiet and let
the speaker have his turn.

My impression of Duarte was
that he was a hothead. He asked
permission to make a rebuttal.
A vote was taken, and after the
young man showed his slides,
Duarte made his rebuttal."

Laemmle called Duarte's des-
cription of wall decorations
lie also, and said:

There is a poster of Guevara
but none of Castro. There is one
poster showing a mother and
child with the word "Peace" and
another that says: War is not
healthy for children, flowers
and other living things. We
took down a picture of John F.
Kennedy so we could project
the slides on the blank wall."

Laemmle said he didn't recall
anyone saying the United States
needs another Fidel Castro. His
father, also present at the meet-
ing, said that like the son he was
was Sirhan.

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